1. Introduction

In this essay I argue that an inequality exists within the Dominican Republic between the natives and the Haitian asylum seekers and refugees that have migrated there. This is a relevant global ethics problem because it emphasizes the morality of human beings and questions the capacity of ethical treatment of different nationalities. It poses a problem in terms of the political wellbeing of the state and its citizens because the government of the Dominican Republic must respond and accept the burden of the immigrants. The well-being and quality of living should be of concern to people as well as the effects this relationship has on developed countries in terms of needing financial support. My solution would be to create equality between the Haitian and DR populations by granting the Haitians a title of citizens so that they can be seen as equals under the law and by other citizens. Citizenship grants the legal status of property ownership, job acquisition, obtaining bank loans, tuition payments for schooling, and insurance. (Residency and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic). During my time in the Dominican Republic I worked with a Haitian family supported by cultivating sugar cane. The Haitian refugees had lost their income with the introduction of machinery that displaced the need for human labor. Since they were refugees and not citizens they weren’t able to find new legal employment. Their previous sugar cane work had been under the table. This underlines the need for the refugees to attain citizenship because they are left without a means of survival without the document.

1.1

First I explain Rousseou’s social contract in order to divulge how the two nationalities could learn to coexist with one another.

1.2

Second, I discuss how Rousseou argues for a contract between the governed and governors as well as a contract between all members of society.

1.3

Third, I provide a possible criticism of the population’s coexisting through Mill’s theory of Utilitarianism.

1.4

Finally, I address some of the ways that this criticism can be responded to so that basic human rights are recognized and prioritized.

1.1

Rousseous social contract provides a solution for two nationalities living in one state. The main concern with the integration of the populations is the loss of individual rights. “Each man’s power and freedom are his main means of self-preservation. How is he to put them under the control of others without damaging himself” (Rousseau 1)? The solution to this problem is found by through the use of a social contract. In the Dominican Republic the power struggle is between the Haitians trying to receive their basic human rights as refugees while being discriminated against by the Dominicans who are fighting for their own resources and rights from their corrupt government. Rousseau’s social contract’s first stipulation is, “the individual member alienates himself totally to the whole community together with all his rights” (Rousseau 1). This rule would attract the two cultures to define themselves as one community. Reducing this stark division would be the first step to living with rights in harmony. Haitians are not welcomed by the Dominicans made clear by prejudices and public displays of aggression. In one town, “protest erupted over the refugees’ presence, and a number of migrants fled. Banners sprang up, calling on Haitians to go home” (Archibold). Governmental displays of discrimination are present against the Haitians as well. “Police and military near the border, with little more to go on than darker skin color and failure to produce identification, have stopped cars and buses and forced them to Haiti” (Archibold). The social contract creates a society in which, “no one will be tempted to make that condition of shared equality worse for other men” (Rousseau 1). Creating this dependency on one another would alleviate the discrimination between the Haitian and Dominican populations because, “duty and interest thus equally require the two contracting partied to aid each other mutually” (Rousseau 1).

1.2

A further incentive for the two nations to coexist in harmony is the body politic. In order to ensure that people obey the social contract the next stipend is, “whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be forced to obey it by the whole body politic, which means nothing else but that he will be forced to be free” (Rousseau 2). This uses a government to reinforce the social contract and stabilize the relationship between the two societies. The body politic would use the administrative institutions of the state to integrate the Haitian and Dominican nationalities. The goal of uniting the two societies is for both nationalities to live without fear of persecution or having their rights taken away. To reassure the Dominican citizens that their rights won’t be taken away and given to the Haitians Rousseau states that, “ whatever benefits he had in the state of nature but lost in the civil state, a man gains more than enough new ones to make up for them” (Rousseau 2). Creating a system in which the Dominicans realize that they would gain rights and not lose them by helping the Haitians would encourage participation in the social contract. The system created would be a dependency between the Haitian and Dominicans reinforced by a common government system successfully establishing two nations within one state.

1.3

The Utilitarian theory is supported by the native Dominican populations as they distrust and fear the outcomes of the refugee populations. The approach to this problem would be to, “compare the benefits and costs of each alternative. Whichever has the greater net benefit is the best alternative” (Mill 1). This approach disagrees with giving basic human rights to the Haitian refugees because the majority of residents living in the Dominican Republic do not want and fear the immigration because of the negative effect the refugees have on the state. “We are defending our sovereignty because Dominican manpower has been practically eliminated in construction” (Archibold). The economy suffers from the support of the refugees as, “the unemployment rate is high here-about 14 percent last year, it is among the highest in Latin America.” (Archibold). For a Utilitarian, social contract is not the best approach because it disregards the idea of the greatest happiness. Utilitarianism is a moral theory that, “asserts that we ought to produce the most happiness or pleasure that we can and reduce suffering and unhappiness” (Mill 1). This suffering comes in the form of cholera being brought to the island by the Haitian migrants. “Cholera, which has killed nearly 6,000 in Haiti since October, has killed more than 90 in the Dominican Republic” (Archibold). The reduction in suffering wouldn’t be applied to the Haitian refugees, but instead to the natives of the Dominican Republic because they represent the majority.

1.4

While both theories address possible solutions to the situation, the moral theory of utilitarianism still denies basic human rights to a population of human beings. The greatest good idea seems like a valid approach; however human rights should not be sacrificed. The social contract would allow both groups to learn to live as one community. The mistreatment of the Haitian refugees would be resolved because the government and military would no longer set a precedent of prejudice towards the refugees if mutual dependency is achieved. A system of dependency would be created so both groups want to coexist for their own personal benefit. The social contract would create a system that produces more happiness and good for more people than utilitarianism ever could. Another criticism noted is, “ no one can consider all of the variable that it requires us to consider: the probable consequences of our action to all affected in terms of duration, intensity, fruitfulness, likelihood, and type of quality of pleasure” (Mill 7).

1. Summary

The problem consists of how two nations can learn to live within the confines of one state. The Dominicans struggle with the incorporation of the Haitian refugee population because of the burden it has on their home. As a result prejudices and basic human rights are denied to the Haitian refugees. The moral theory that presents the best solution is through adhering to the Social Contract idea presented by Rousseau because the result is the balanced integration of two cultures. Mill would object to this solution because the greatest good for the greatest number of people would not be immediately satisfied, however basic human rights should not be sacrificed for the majority pleasure.

1. Conclusion

Breaking cultural boundaries and unifying different nationalities with historical differences is challenging and time consuming. Prejudices are long lasting engrained grudges held by populations. The divide between the neighboring islands creates a situation where human rights are ignored and overlooked. The dislike of Haitian refugees is a cultural prejudice remedied through education. Two moral theories are relevant in the discussion of this topic. Mill’s idea of Utilitarianism, states that the rights of the refugees would be ignored to satisfy the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Rousseau’s theory of the Social Contract would allow the two cultures to coexist with one another and seek dependency while living as one community.